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REPUBLICAN EMBARRASMENTS

BY MEDILL McCORMICK

No discussion of the present Democratic opportunity has been more interesting than that contributed to *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* by its editor and other distinguished Democrats. But from a Republican standpoint, like other discussions of the same subject, the contributions to the *REVIEW*, while giving full weight to Democratic difficulties, have done scant justice to Republican embarrassments. The divisions in the Democracy are potential; the divisions in the Republican party are actual. Democratic harmony is possible; Republican disharmony is proven to the country, so that the voter, disgusted with Republican dissensions, last November elected a Democratic House. Is there any reason, at present, why he should reverse his judgment?

The genuine issues before the country during the present administration have been the tariff, railroad-rate regulation, conservation, and reciprocity. These remain the sole important issues. The last was born after the election and, in a sense, was begotten of it. The other three were harshly controversial from the beginning; they gripped the popular imagination and were the bases of the split in the Republican party. It is unnecessary to describe their origin and development, but it is necessary to note that upon all three the insurgents and the President disagreed.

The Aldrich tariff law was passed in spite of insurgent protests and was signed by the President, who subsequently became its principal defender. The so-called Elkins law, drafted by the Attorney-General, contains one important feature unknown to the previous acts governing the Interstate Commerce Commission. In the past, in order to prevent an advance in rates, it had been necessary for shippers to prove the advance unjustifiable or unduly onerous. Under the new law, the burden of proof of the proposed rate's equity rests with the carrier. That provision, which in-

augurates real rate regulation, was unknown to the administration bill. It was forced into the act by the insurgents, who were punished therefor by the withdrawal of the patronage. Whatever the merits of the Ballinger-Pinchot conservation controversy may have been, the sympathy of the country was with Pinchot, whose friends in Congress were the still recalcitrant, though punished, progressives.

In the light of the fight over these three pre-election questions an analysis of the result of the election is illuminating. It measures the character of the division in the Republican party and the attitude of the voters toward the administration. The analysis is most easily made by a tabular comparison of the political complexions of the Sixty-first and Sixty-second Congresses:

House of Representatives.	Stand-patters.	Progressives.	Democrats.
Sixty-first Congress	192	26	172
Sixty-second Congress	107	55	228*
	—	—	—
	Loss 85	Gain 29	Gain 56

Important as are the relative increases and decreases of the political factions and parties in the House, the elections gave even more important evidence in the country's discontent with the administration, and especially with the wing of the party with which it has hitherto worked. The Democrats carried the country by winning in stand-pat Republican States. While the progressives lost only one State to the Democrats, the stand-patters lost nine.

In 1908 Taft had 321 electoral votes and Bryan 162. If Presidential electors had been selected by the voters last fall the Democratic candidate would have had 310 electoral votes and the Republicans 173. Of these Republican votes it is significant that 98 would have come from progressive States and 75 from regular States.

The election widened the breach already existing in the party. Nothing in the short session showed that there was any tendency to close it. On the contrary, the party previously divided horizontally was then split prismatically on the Canadian tariff bill. In the House a majority of Republicans voted against the President's own measure. The Speaker led the opposition and was followed by an equal proportion of regulars and insurgents. Both wings of the party have split with the President, and the latest cause for

* Includes one Socialist.

contention remains. As nearly as can be foreseen, it again will have the support of the Democrats and again will divide the Republicans.

On one important question or another a majority of Republican Congressmen have differed from the President, who, in his own language, is the "titular" head of his party. And in some instances the differences are so irreconcilable that, if Mr. Taft is renominated, the extremer insurgents will bolt and run a progressive Republican candidate for President.

High hopes for the permanent union of Democrats are not necessary to make them shine in present comparison with the Republicans. It may be that, within sixty days after the inauguration of a Democratic President, the Democracy will be as badly split as the Republican party is now or as the Democracy was under Cleveland's second administration. But whatever their prospective condition may be, their present harmony is as inviting to the electorate as it is discouraging to Republicans. The leaders of the Democratic House give evidence of statesmanship and united purpose. The Ways and Means Committee, with a membership consistently revisionist, is succeeding in organizing the new Congress to the reasonable satisfaction of its members. The plan of co-ordinating the appropriation committees, through a common committee of their chairmen, is calculated to check the extravagance which for years has characterized Congress. The courage and consistency of the Democratic leaders give promise of the firm, but moderate, legislation for which the country hopes. It indicates a sensible revision of a few of the most burdensome tariff schedules. It indicates that that revision will inaugurate the promised reduction of customs duties without bringing disaster on the over-protected manufacturers and their employees.

This comparison of the internal condition of the two parties presses itself upon every Republican who hopes to win in 1912 and who believes that, in spite of present Democratic harmony, fantastic disunion, hurtful to the country, will follow their coming into power two years from now. Not a fifth of the Republicans in Congress look forward to anything but defeat in 1912. And yet, in the face of the effective organizing of their opponents, they sit inert, making no plans to compose their own differences or to choose a really popular and positive leader for the next campaign.

MEDILL McCORMICK.